

Chittenden Locks fully operational once more

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The

summer's-long partial closure of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks in Ballard is over. Maritime traffic will begin moving through the small lock this afternoon at about 3 p.m. according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, which operates the project.

The problem involved the pintle bearings that support the four gates of the small lock. The lock operators noticed they seemed to be deteriorating at an increasing rate. To reduce wear on the bearings, the Corps reduced use of the small lock, a strategy intended to reduce the likelihood of complete failure of the gates and long-term blockage of the locks.

According to Marian Valentine, the lock's project manager an even bigger piece of bad news was "The soonest we could have new pintle bearings fabricated and on site was October and the potential for further more serious damage to the gates would have been increased if had we continued to average our norm of 240 lockings per week."

As a result of the planning the small lock continued to pass emergency services vessels, and other commercial vessels, at the discretion of the lockmaster. The locks were still operated "on demand," 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Most trips through the locks experienced little, or no, impact.

"Although the large lock did see more lockage's and does use more water, we were able to successfully modify operations due to the abundant snow pack and late snowmelt this year," said Valentine. Had a water shortage become an issue later in the summer, the small lock may have returned to more frequent operation, she noted.

The Chittenden Locks safely transits well over 60,000 vessels each year between Lake Washington and Salmon Bay in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Project Control Tower at 206-783-7000. A Lockmaster can help you with any questions you may have.

For

even more information about the Chittenden Locks is also available on-line at:

<http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/%20PublicMenu/%20Menu.cfm?sitename=lwsc&pagename=mainpage>>face="Times New Roman">[http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/ PublicMenu/](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/)

Menu.cfm?sitename=lwsc&pagename=mainpageface="Times New Roman"> and for current information about activities at the Locks or "Locking Through", check the Corps of Engineers website at:

<http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/>and select "Dams and Locks" then "Lake Washington Ship Canal" from the leftmost column.

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